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American Camping Association

FALL

2008

THE BIRCH BARK

P.O. Box 148, Waterford, Maine 04088

Winter: (207) 741-2930

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Rich Deering '73, Alumni Director • Michael Mattson '83, Camp Director

THE ALUMNI NEWSLETTER OF BIRCH ROCK CAMP

A Remembrance of Birch Rocker KISUK CHEUNG (1928-2008)

by Daniel Cheung S'77



Kisuk at KUA

My father Kisuk "Keesoo" Cheung loved Birch Rock as his home away from home. He passed away on October 2, 2008 in Honolulu, Hawaii, where he finally settled down after retirement, although he never really retired from working and traveling. I was never sure of the chronology of his life since his arrival to America from Korea shortly after the end of World War II. However, one constant theme has woven its way through all of his stories and anecdotes; his first impression of America and the strange new people he met were permanently shaped by Chief and Onie Brewster, who were at Kimball Union Academy and Birch Rock Camp.

Chief was Headmaster and Onie was Kisuk's English teacher. When Kisuk arrived at the West Coast, after a long, slow ocean voyage across the Pacific Ocean, he barely spoke English and knew very little about the United States, other than what he had learned from reading and news reports during World War II.

According to his stories, Kisuk's years at KUA were fond ones that exposed him to the New England Yankee work ethic and sensibilities. Chief and Onie were like parents to him and Chef Albert's cooking and kitchen were among his fondest memories. He also made friends at KUA whom he kept in touch with until his final days. One life-long friend was the late Pat Brewster, whom my father followed in graduating from KUA and played on the KUA lacrosse team with. During the summers, Kisuk followed his American family to Birch Rock which formed the basis of his most indelibly memorable and happiest experiences. He returned every summer until he finished his studies at Dartmouth College. In the summer of 1950, war broke out in Korea, and Kisuk was cut off from his family until after the military armistice in 1953. It was at BRC and with his American friends, that he found a refuge from the confusing world around him and taught him the true value of friendships that lasted a lifetime. Kisuk took the camp's motto, "Help the Other Fellow," to heart and in the decades after, he has been best remembered by his friends as someone who helped others in achieving their dreams and aspirations.

After finishing his college studies in civil engineering, Kisuk briefly worked as an engineer in Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine, on the numerous dam and road construction projects during the mid-1950s, until he was drafted into the United States Army. He went through Basic Training at Fort Dix, New Jersey, where he achieved the highest rifle marksmanship score in his trainee class and was assigned to a psychological warfare unit at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Since he grew up speaking Korean and Japanese, he was then reassigned to the First Cavalry Division in Tokyo, Japan, where he reunited with some of his classmates from college, and was sent to Seoul, Korea in 1956. There, he was assigned to the Army Corps of Engineers' Far East District office, which happened to be located across the street and a half-block away from his childhood home where his parents still lived. After discharge from the Army, he continued to

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A message from the Alumni Director

Congratulations to all campers, counselors, staff members, parents, alumni and supporters! You did it! Another camp season has come and gone.....and now we breath a little stronger, stand confidently taller, look at our world more openly, feeling infused by the lessons we have learned and the fun that we have shared. Camping is a lifelong learning process. We are all consumers of Birch Rock's magical anecdotes: building new relationships, being ourselves, respecting others, broadening our skills and enjoying the opportunity to help others.



Rich Deering

Camping represents our own mythical circle of life in three parts: separation, initiation, return. First, we help to facilitate a foundation of positive change by teaching independence and self-reliance. Secondly, we provide a safe, nurturing environment to learn, listen, laugh and lift. Finally, we return home with a stronger sense of being that hopefully reflects a positive enhancement in our camp families and the world in which we live. We are agents of lifelong change.

We look forward to sharing and hearing your stories and myths during our "off-season." Birch Rock's winter office and resources are here for you. We appreciate any lead of a potential boy who might benefit from the BRC experience....In the spirit of "Help the Other Fellow."

Faithfully,
Rich

Continued from cover

work for the Corps of Engineers. He married his wife and my mother Kyunghhee, whose family had known his for centuries, in 1956 and had three children, Daniel, William and Carol, all born in Seoul, where we resided until 1960 and later moved to Tokyo, Japan for eight years. We took occasional trips to the United States, including a family vacation that took us to East Waterford in the summer of 1964. Kisuk's subsequent assignments with the Corps of Engineers took him back to Korea, then to Alaska and Hawaii, with a final assignment to Washington, DC, where he retired from government service.

In retirement, Kisuk's energy would not let him take it easy. He continued to work, based out of Honolulu, Hawaii, often traveling to Korea, Japan and China on business, finding new opportunities to expand construction and engineering business for an engineering consulting firm he headed. A stroke in 2006 compelled him to stay put and take it easy, although he continued to speak at academic seminars, give presentations to professional and civic groups, and stayed with his consulting company as an advisor. His mind was still full of ideas and fully functional, although his physical health deteriorated and he passed away on October 2, 2008. He never forgot his friends and family, especially the Birch Rock Family.

I would like to thank Pat and Carol Brewster, Mike Deneault, Mike Apicelli, and all of Kisuk's friends from KUA, Birch Rock and Dartmouth, who so kindly filled in all of the blank spaces in my conception of my father's life when he first arrived in America. Although there are some who have passed away before Kisuk, I was fortunate to have heard stories of my father from them, before they went on to their eternal rest.



Kisuk In the shop



The Phoenix Rises Through the Ashes – Chief's Cabin Burns & Rebuilds

Waterford –June 21, 2008: At approximately, 6 o'clock in the evening, while the staff was off-campus for a team-building event, there was a fire in Chief's Cabin, which was the housing for our Camp Director Mike Mattson and the camp's art room. A faithful neighbor spotted the smoke and called the Waterford Fire Department. The firefighters from Waterford, with the assistance of firefighters from Harrison and Norway, did an outstanding job making sure that the fire did not spread to the rest of our campus. However, we were saddened by the loss of two camp dogs, Kiko & Gritz, and the cabin in the fire.

Fortunately, this building was not housing our campers, and the opening our 83rd season was not delayed. Chief's Cabin is now currently under reconstruction for reopening next summer and our camp will have a new art studio and staff housing.

However, the true essence of this unfortunate experience was the outpouring of support from Birch Rock's staff, parents, neighbors, alumni and campers. We are very grateful for this community and our fellow Maine residential camps who made every effort to lend their support and reach out to help restore BRC.

~ Finding Freedom on a Trail in the Woods ~

By Senior Camper Harry Netzer '00s

I woke up early after restless sleep. The sun was only beginning to rise as I sat up, the top of my mummy sleeping bag hooked on my head. A mosquito buzzed around my ear and I swatted it away, causing my sleeping bag to slip below my shoulders. It was a cool and damp morning so I quickly reached for my shirt. There was no reason to lie down again on the soft green moss. I was fully awake with the remembrance that it was the morning of my Solo.

Soon I was plodding my way to the white pine sapling where I was to replace the red flag I had put up at sundown with a black one to show I had made it through the night. Thoughts of the years leading up to my Solo floated through my head but were replaced with petty consideration of my many bug bites. I thought that I was supposed to have learned something but so far I had only learned that even one hundred percent DEET bug spray doesn't ward off all mosquitoes. I thought I was supposed to find something that would cap off the Ranger badge but that something was still hiding behind the trees.

The Ranger was my final goal as a camper at Birch Rock. Ever since the Ranger was reintroduced in 2005 I had looked forward to doing the badge parts, particularly the Secret Training and the Solo. To me the Solo was just as intriguing and mysterious as the Secret Training. I wondered what it would be like sleeping alone in the woods and not talking to anyone for nearly twenty-four hours. The years and days leading up to the Solo crept past slowly and quietly. When the day of the Solo finally came I barely realized that this was it, the last part of my Ranger that I had looked forward to for so long.

I came back to my campsite and rapidly took down the tarp shelter I had put up the previous afternoon. Ryno had shown me how to make a makeshift backpack out of a tarp and rope back when we were at camp and I replicated the technique with my supplies, using the tarp that had been my roof and the ropes that held it up. With my totem staff leaning against a tree and my neat bundle on the ground it almost looked like I had never been there. I brushed up the flattened moss I slept on top of with the bottom of my shoe and scattered leaves over the blackened scar where my campfire had been, hiding the last signs of my stay on that spot.

Ryno had told us that when the sun was three hands' widths above the horizon the Solo would be over. I raised my right arm so my pinky was right where I began to see blue between the foliage of the trees. The sun appeared to be three fingers above the horizon. There was still a lot of time left for me in the woods. I turned and looked around my campsite for something to occupy myself but saw nothing of the multitude of manmade objects I see every day except for my blue tarp pack sitting on the ground and my staff propped against a tree. Deepening into the woods was the continuation of the green road that had led me to my campsite. I grasped my staff and began to walk it.

I had not told anyone before I left my campsite that I was going walking alone in the woods. No one was there saying the woods are dangerous and unknown. This was the Solo, and I was free with the knowledge that I was safe in those woods. The road was clear and open before me and I stepped with confidence. All around me was the beauty of a new morning. I saw glistening white birches whose bark I could use to start a fire, clusters of Indian cucumber plants that have edible tubers, chanterelle mushrooms that I had eaten for wild food. A smile crept onto my face, and then turned into a grin. After a few minutes of walking I turned and looked back. I had come a long way.



Harry Netzer with Mentor Ryno Massey & Fellow Ranger Ben Howard



BRC appreciates your contribution to the camp community. Some items we wish for are:

Used Automatic • Pick Up Truck

Framed Backpacks • Two Man Tents

New Sunfish Sailboat • New Commercial Convection Oven

Kayak & Canoe Paddles • Art Supplies & Equipment

New Swim Docks

Birch Rock is a 501c3 nonprofit corporation. All donations received are tax-deductible.

Please contact us at birchrock@aol.com if you might be able to accommodate any of these wishes.

Thank You!

The Elusive Ranger Badge

By Senior Camper Benjamin Howard

The van pulled up to the edge of the woods that would be our home for the night. We were on the final stage of the long and elusive ranger badge. Only one person had gotten it since 1976. I could feel a mixture of anxiety and excitement, fear and uncertainty. As the van came to a stop, all of the conversation stopped. We piled out the van. Behind us we could see the road we came in on and civilization. In front of us stood the wilderness. I pulled my survival pack, with all of my belongings, out of the van: a sweatshirt, a means to start a fire, a slingshot, a book, and some food. I heaved on my pack and we began to walk down the trail. As we walked deeper into the woods the fear within me grew. Finally we came to a clearing and Ryno, my guide and mentor, said "This looks like a good spot." I told him that I would take it. Ryno gave me my final instructions and I said goodbye to him and my friend Harry.

I began to set up my shelter with the tarp and rope that just before had made up my pack. The shelter that I set up looked like a basic tent, the ones that you see in pictures of old. Once I had set up my shelter for the night I began to scour the forest floor for wood. As I was gathering wood I was led to the edge of the river. I looked down across the swollen river and saw a horrible sight. Out in the distance was a wall of rain coming my way. I started to collect wood faster so that I would have enough dry wood to last through the night. I was running at full speed getting wood and throwing it under my shelter. I picked up the last couple of sticks and ducked under my shelter, the rain hit.

I sat under my shelter in the hopes of waiting out the rain. It had rained off and on for the last couple of days and I assumed that would continue. The rain finally did stop, but not before it had made every stick in the woods wet. I emerged from my shelter with all my dry wood to start a fire. By the feeling of my stomach beginning to eat my insides I knew I had to get a fire started. I set up a lean-to fire against a rock. I concentrated and lit the tinder with my magnesium. The fire sparked, dwindled and died because not enough of the tinder lit. I brightly thought to myself "ok, that one did not work" so I made a teepee fire. This time I used a match to light it but again I was unsuccessful. I watched the flame slowly die and I began to cry. The sadness that was inside me began to spill out into the forest. The only living things that knew of my sorrow were the small creatures that occupied the woods.

Most people in America do not know how important fire is to everyday life. It was then that I learned just how important fire was. I began to collect myself and refocused on the task at hand. After my first two attempts I had used up most of my birch bark a highly flammable fire starter. I began to worry because I did not see any other birch trees in the area and the ones I did were dead. I had just enough birch bark left so I decided not to worry that much. I went out to gather more wood, hungry and tired. I had much trouble finding wood for my fire you would think because I was in the middle of the woods there would be an abundance of sticks in twigs. Finally finding wood far away from the camps sight I began to lug it back to my camp site which was a hard and labor intensive task. I came back with much more wood and began the method that I was first taught when I was seven, the log cabin. I made the cabin how I had always made it and got ready to tell the story about the burning house that I had told myself since I was seven. I lit the match, hand shaking from fear I would fail again and spend the

night hungry and cold? The fire started like so many log cabins I had built before it. I felt a surge of excitement swell within me as the flame grew bigger and bigger. Feeling the determination not to let this fire go out I ran to go get more wood to feed the baby fire.

When I returned I began mixing together the ingredients that I had brought to make bread and then I put the dough directly on the coals to cook. As the bread cooked I began to look for more wood so that the fire could keep going all night. When I got back, I took the bread out of the fire as it was fully cooked. The charred ash cake was delicious at the time and I ate it with vigor as I scavenged for wood.

After I had amassed a sizable pile of wood I prepared to go to sleep. I did not have a sleeping bag so I bundled up in all the clothes that I had to make a bed. At home it is easy for me to go to sleep because I have a false sense of safety but out there in the woods by myself my mind began to think of all the evil things that could befall me in the woods. I lay awake listening to the sounds of the forest. I heard the foreign sound of a boat in the distance and tried to focus on but it soon faded away. I fell in and out of sleep for what seemed like hours, but I will never really know how long it was. The last time I woke up something flew into my shelter. It thudded into the side of the tent my heart started to pump faster as my body released adrenaline I was ready to fight or run. At first it continued to try to get through the tarp, but in the end the creature flew away. After that I fell asleep until morning. When I woke, the sun was coming up and my heart lifted from the joy of seeing it.

It marked the end of the long night in the woods. It also marked the end of my mind tormenting me with all the evils of the woods. I got out of my shelter and went to the remains of my fire. It had gone out. I was cold but I easily restarted it on my first try, making me even happier. I took down my shelter and turned it back into my backpack. I then waited and waited for Harry and Ryno to reappear. I watched the sun rise slowly up into the sky as I waited by the river. I suddenly saw them, Harry and Ryno running up towards me. My heart leapt and I jumped up to meet them. Ryno approached me and said "Well done, Ranger." As we walked back we talked happily about our night but all my mind could think of was I had done it. I had finally achieved my ranger badge after 9 years of trying, learning, and hard work I was a Birch Rock Ranger.



Brewster Lodge Dedication

By Dave Weeks, Director Emeritus



Friends of Birch Rock and the 2008 Camp Community gathered on the hillside Saturday afternoon, August 2 to celebrate the opening of the newly constructed Brewster Lodge. Alumni Director Rich Deering addressed the assembled with words of welcome and a review of Birch Rock history leading to the construction of this impressive two story state of the art health facility. After his remarks Trustee and close friend of the Brewster Family, Peter Herzig spoke of the camp founders, William "Chief" and Onie Brewster and the legacy of the Brewster Family. He then introduced fellow Trustee Dave Weeks who chose two traditional camp songs and a favorite hymn to sing as a reminder of the Birch Rock values "Chief" and Onie along with co-founder and songsmith Bartlett Boyden promoted in 1926. With songbooks in hand, the BRC community was invited to sing "Semper Fidelis" (Always Faithful) or commonly known as B-I-R-C-H R-O-C-K. Dave discussed the value of loyalty and the 47 year long friendship between Director Chief Brewster, Chef Albert Bryan and Maintenance man Omar Moxie. Dave Weeks then reminded the gathered of the words, "Look Up, Laugh, Love and Lift" carved on a plaque above the BR library door. This refrain of a hymn favorite next to be sung, "I Would Be True," spoke of the importance of character building. Finally the audience raised its voice to sing Birch Rock's "Alma Mater" which showcased the value of the birch upon the rock. "Its whiteness stands for purity of thought and word and deed. Its upward growth towards heaven above our hearts shall ever lead." After words of gratitude for all the Brewster Family had done to sustain the spirit of Birch Rock, Rich Deering then invited Board Chair and senior member of the Brewster family, Seth Brewster, to come forward and receive the Brewster Lodge plaque with his brother Toby that would be mounted above the entrance to this beautiful new building adorning the Birch Rock campus. Ever thoughtful and humble, Seth thanked everyone for this wonderful tribute to his family.



BIRCH BRIEFS

Janice Walker & David Jenkins Celebrate 25 Years in Maine Camping

The Birch Rock Community & The Maine Youth Camping Association were proud to acknowledge Camp Lady Janice Walker of Waterford, ME and Former Trip Leader David Jenkins of Sanford, ME for their distinguished twenty-five years of service in Maine Youth Camping. Birch Rock's Rich Deering presented each individual a certificate of recognition as the current President of Maine Youth Camping Association on Alumni Day. Janice and David's commitment to camping will also placed on the MYCA's Hall of Fame.

Birch Rock's Newest Whales

The 2008 season adds nine more amazing swimmers who persevered around McWain Pond. Congratulations to Will Brewster, Harry Netzer, Jake Cohen, Jake Cahill, Chris Rios, Jamie Foley, Ben Howard and Matt Guttman. Great work and congratulations, Gentlemen!

Birch Rock Trustees

Birch Rock Camp is pleased to reelect Seth Brewster, Chair; Michael Herzig, Treasurer and elect Tom Clemence, Vice Chair and Ryck Birch, Secretary. Additionally, JoJo Herzig, mother of David Herzig was elected a trustee for a three year term.

Alex McLaughlin: 2008 Triathlon Champion

They swam, biked and ran and were perhaps the most accomplished competitors to date. Congratulations to Nat Howard, Patrick McLaughlin, Will Manning, Nate Geremia, Kyle Moretti, Ryan Boothby, Jake Cahill, Jake Cohen, Chris Rios, Ben Howard and Alex McLaughlin who finished in a time of 50:21.

Two More Join the Decade Club

Congratulations to Nick Musciano and Matt Clifford for their 10 years @ BRC!

Biroca Blast Dedicated to Cathy Roland—aka Wonder Woman

The BRC Senior Campers dedicated this season's camper publication to Cathy Roland. The dedication testimonial was presented to Cathy and the entire community was articulated on the camp season's last full day: "Through Cathy's six summers serving BR she has integrated herself into our community in a greater way than any camp nurse in recent memory. We can all see Cathy's dedication to camp in her Sunday trips to church with campers, Vitamin C tablets at breakfast, her judging cabin competition, and regular announcements reminding all of us to wear sunscreen and drink more water. Whenever there is a health issue, Cathy takes action quickly to ensure our well-being. She is a great camp mother, leader and Wonder Woman, who helps us to be better, healthier and stronger men each day."

Birch Rock Camp Stats

Here are some interesting statistical numbers regarding our 2008 season: 70% of the camp staff are veteran Birch Rockers with over 320 camp seasons. There were 50 out of 114 new campers this season in total with 65% from New England; 25% from the Mid-Atlantic region; 5% from other USA regions; 5% from France, Spain, Israel and Denmark.

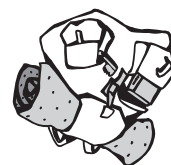
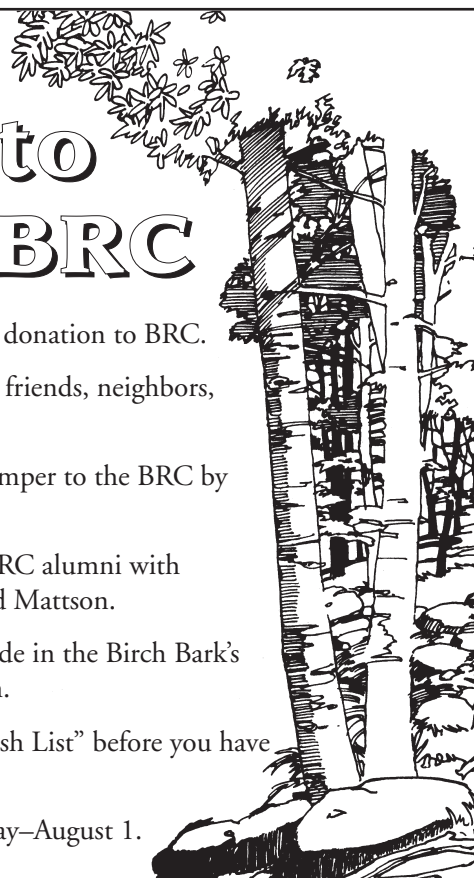
Mark Your Calendars for 2009!



Spring Clean-up Day	Saturday, May 30, 2009
BRC Summer Office Opens	Tuesday, June 2, 2009
BRC Staff Orientation	Monday, June 15, 2009
C.I.T. Orientation	Saturday, June 20, 2009
BRC Opening 1st Session	Wednesday, June 24, 2009
BRC 1st Visitation Day	Sunday, July 12, 2009
BRC 1st Session Ends	Saturday, July 18 2009
BRC Opening 2nd Session	Sunday, July 19, 2009
Cubs' Camp	Sunday, July 19, 2009
Maine Wilderness Adventure	Sunday, July 19, 2009
Cubs' Camp ends	Saturday, August 1, 2009
Alumni Day	Saturday, August 1, 2009
BRC 2nd Visitation Day	Sunday, August 2, 2009
BRC for Boys & MWA ends	Tuesday, August 11, 2009
BRC Family Camp	Friday, August 14, 2009
BRC Family Camp ends	Tuesday, August 18, 2009

It's Easy to Help BRC

- Send a tax-deductible donation to BRC.
- Promote BRC among friends, neighbors, family and colleagues.
- Refer a prospective camper to the BRC by phone or email.
- Host a gathering of BRC alumni with Directors Deering and Mattson.
- Send us news to include in the Birch Bark's Alumni News column.
- Ask us about our "Wish List" before you have your spring yard sales.
- Join us for Alumni Day–August 1.



**BIRCH ROCK CAMP
IS NOW ACCEPTING
APPLICATIONS
FOR THE 2009 SEASON.**

For more information,
please visit our website
at:
www.birchrock.org

BIRCH ROCK CAMP

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